GUIDE TO HELPING YOUR KWWSPCA RESCUE DOG SETTLE INTO ITS NEW HOME

First of all, thank you for giving a KWWSPCA Recue Dog a second chance. This is a guide to give you a few simple tips to help your new family member adjust to their new environment.

Adopting a rescue dog is rewarding and exciting for both you and the dog, and the first few weeks you have them will set the tone for your time together. And, remember, we are always here to give you advice and information if you need it at any time.

The first and most important thing you need to remember is BE PATIENT

Many of the dogs that come into the care of Animal Rescues have not had the easiest of lives before they arrived. Some of them have never been pets or been in a home environment. Some were never treated kindly or given any proper training. Unfortunately, in many cases we have no idea what they have gone through. While we do work closely with the dogs during their time with us, to prepare them for their new homes, there is going to be a period of adjustment for you both when you first bring your dog home. If we are aware of any issues that the dog may have, we will always let you know.

Please be patient as it can take anywhere from 2 to 4 weeks for your dog to settle down and become comfortable with its new surroundings, sometimes even longer.

Introductions to Other Pets in the Home

If you already have another dog or other pets in the home, it is important to ensure they have a positive first meeting. Don't just bring your new dog into your home and expect your other pets to be happy about it as even the most dog friendly pet may be a little territorial. To help avoid any conflict with another dog, introduce them on neutral territory outside the home and walk them together first to help establish a positive relationship between them (and you!) before they meet in the home.

If you have a cat in the home, introduce them slowly, keep your dog leashed and reward him for calm behaviour while the cat is in the room. If the dog attempts to chase the cat, distract him and reward him for focusing on you when he calms down. Teaching commands such as 'Leave it' is very useful in this situation. Do not restrain your cat but allow it to leave the room if it is uncomfortable. It may take a few weeks for your cat to become happy with a new dog, especially if it hasn't been used to a dog in the home before.

Introduction to Human Family Members

Understandably, everyone in the household will be very excited to meet the new dog, especially children, but it is important that everyone is calm. Even the friendliest and most social of dogs may get a little over-whelmed if everyone in the household surrounds them, tries to stroke them, speaks loudly or excited children start squealing.
Stay calm and allow the dog to sniff everyone and give him treats to make it a very positive experience. Sometimes the dog may be a little nervous of certain members of the household, but, given time and positive interactions with that person, your dog should be fine in a few weeks.

It is of vital importance to ensure you NEVER leave a dog alone with children. Children must be taught proper 'dog manners' such as never allowing them to go near the dog when it is eating or sleeping, ensuring they never climb or lie on the dog or pull at its fur, tail, ears, paws or mouth. Even the most child friendly dog may snap or bite if it gets a sudden fright or is hurt. When it comes to your dog and children it is your responsibility to make sure they interact well and stay safe.

Routine and Consistency are the Keys

When you first bring your new dog home, it is important to establish a routine such as when the dog is fed, brought out to go to the toilet, taken for walks, etc. Consistency will help your dog settle into the home. Your new dog may not be house trained but with a good routine, accidents will not be an issue for long. Bringing your dog out to go to the toilet after he wakes up, after eating and drinking, and when you see him sniffing intently or circling, will help avoid accidents and rewarding him when he goes outside will be successful in a relatively short time.

Be consistent in the commands you give and reward positive behaviour. Be consistent also with what you allow your dog to do and not do. If you do not want your dog on the furniture, then do not allow him up occasionally as it will just confuse him when you correct him the next time he attempts to do so.

Socialisation and Training

The more socialisation your dog gets the better. It will help ensure that your dog is comfortable in new situations with new people. Dog training classes, regular walks in different locations, positive meetings with strangers, other dogs and animals will all help in this. Never force your dog into a situation it is clearly uncomfortable with, instead slowly build up their confidence.

Training your dog not only makes him easier to handle, it makes him calmer and happier as it is fantastic mental exercise. The more intelligent the dog, the easier it is for them to get bored and a bored dog can develop destructive behaviours. Training is not only good for the dog, it can be a lot of fun and help you and your dog bond.

Between training, socialisation and regular exercise, your dog will be content and calm.

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We wish you a long and happy life with your new dog but if your dog takes an unusually long time to settle, or other issues arise that you are concerned about, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Email kwwspcadogrehoming@gmail.com or phone our helpline on 087-6887136